



Peak Area Newsletter

November 2013

The next Peak Area meeting is the AGM and is on Wednesday, 20 November, starting at 1930, at the Maynard, Main Road, Grindleford, Derbyshire S32 2HE. Prizes, free food, great company and interesting conversation.

The Sec speaks



By Lynn Robinson

Another year has whizzed past and it's time to descend on The Maynard, Grindleford for the winter, kicking off with the AGM and an Ordinary meeting on the 20 November at 1930. **And The Annual Quiz.** This is set to be a superb evening, and with so much that has happened over the past year, it'll be great to reflect on all the achievements.

As ever annual elections are part of the agenda if anyone is interested in standing for any local area positions (such as Chair or Secretary). Neil and I are standing as Chair and Secretary, but we're open to challenges from the floor. If

anyone is interested then please contact either Neil or myself for more information.

The quiz is always great fun, with some amazing prizes on offer. If anyone would like to donate anything, then please bring it along on the night.

I'm looking forward to the publication of "Peak Rock, the history, the routes, the climbers" by Vertebrate late November and the official launch by the editors on 1 December at The Climbing Works, Sheffield
www.climbingworks.com/the-beta/events/2013/12/01/Peak_Rock_Book_Launch/ - the book is definitely on my Santa's list.

Hope you can make the 20 November. Lynn

If you're reading this from a printout, the hyperlinks won't show up (in some cases we do print them). To obtain an electronic version in which the hyperlinks will work, go to the BMC website (www.thebmc.co.uk). Members can have it emailed to them by contacting the BMC office: 0161 445 6111, office@thebmc.co.uk

Deadline for material is 2 weeks before the next meeting



[Dave Turnbull lecture: Patagonia and beyond.](#)

A talk organised by the [Friends of the Peak District](#); Mr Turnbull's recent trip to the Fitzroy / Cerro Torre massif with Stuart



*On the summit of Cerro Torre
Photo: D Turnbull.*

McAleese and Dan Donovan in January this year coincided with one of the best spells of good weather Patagonia has seen in a decade - and he has the photos to prove it. Tuesday 26 November at The Lescar pub, Hunter's Bar, Sheffield. [It's £5, but having heard it for free at a BMC Peak Area meeting I am seriously considering paying to hear him again. Maybe this time he'll reveal why he never takes enough food. Ed.]

Access Notes

By Henry Folkard



Dateline: 6 November 2013

Thanks to all those who gave support to the **Stand up for Stanage** campaign, and indeed to Vertebrate for the logo they devised. Was it a co-incidence it depicted the Unconquerables?

Some 15,000 people agreed with the BMC's criteria, and it generated quite a bit of publicity too. Rob Dyer fielded a fair bit of this because he spoke for the BMC at ARP Committee - I told him afterwards he now knew what it was like to be a volunteer - but I had my fair share too. The

slant most of the publicity gave was 'Stanage for Sale' and since it was not sold, the campaign was generally deemed to have been a success. The matter of publicly owned land remaining in public ownership, or being held in trust for the Nation, is indeed central, but the campaign was less about who the future custodian would be than about how they would look after it.

As I write it remains the case that everything coming out of the National Park seems to be about the farm, how they can make money from you and me and how many yurts to cram on the camp site. Since they have no vision for the Estate's future care, no management plan, no landscape scale aspirations, no proposals on access routes, and say nothing about its conservation status nor how they will engage with the public let alone encourage those who do not habitually enjoy the benefits of the great outdoors it is hard to avoid the conclusion that what they really want the income for is to cover the costs of staff in Aldern House. We already pay taxes for that. Is the only place they want to meet the public at the Pay and Display machines?

From what we understand of their organisation either one or two Assistant Directors have overall responsibility and there are different officers for car parks, conservation, on site wardening, farm tenancy, budgets, ranger duties, rights of way, woodlands and doubtless one or two more I can't just remember. No wonder they need help with paying staff wages. Surely with a little bit of imagination, multi tasking and empowerment they could manage with just one. The BMC, and indeed the Stanage Forum, have long argued there should be a



unified management structure and holistic vision rather than a series of independent, piecemeal commands.

Dave Turnbull, Adam Long and I met with Jim Dixon, the National Park CEO, and Mary Bagley, an Assistant Director, as a result of our campaign, and I subsequently have had dialogue and meetings (with a Stanage Forum hat on) with Mary Bagley. From what we can glean rather than seize the opportunity to develop the Cruck Barn complex at North Lees Hall as a hub for some form of rural enterprise, and perhaps conversion to a holiday let to provide a steady income, they have opted to let it go to the new tenant farmer.

Pay and Display is very much the flavour of the month, at increased rates. The BMC has suggested a readily available reasonably priced annual ticket for all National Park car parks would be a better option than payment per visit, with a residents' permit similar to that offered by Derbyshire Dales District Council. But so far making such a facility readily available, or valid for more than one car park at a time, is too much for them to get their head round.

Some development based on the toilet block at Hollins Bank could be another option, and need not be objectionable if it is properly designed.

The BMC is anxious to preserve the integrity of the North Lees Camp site, but we suspect the game plan will be to give it to the tenant. The danger with that could be that the opportunities it offers for engagement, and the social reasons for its establishment, could be lost. There might also be a drive to charge more, and drive it up

market (yurts and all that), though our view is that the facilities would need significant upgrade first if it was to go upmarket. We are likely to make some proposals for increasing winter usage of the camp site.

There has been suggestion of establishing some kind of Trust furnished by wealthy denizens of the Hope Valley, with its own membership. Quite what the strength of this is we do not know, but are sceptical and think if it did happen any articles of association would have to be very carefully drafted indeed. Apparently Mary Bagley established some 68 Trusts, mostly for local parks, when she worked in Sheffield, or so I am told (but have not verified), and sees unlimited scope for generating such Trusts. How it would relate to established NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and to the Friends of the Peak remains an open question.

Again there is talk of recruiting volunteers for Stanage. We have suggested that talking to the Eastern Moors Partnership and Sheffield Moors Partnership about partnership working within the same landscape area might be a better first step. Potentially this could make better use of resource, rather than setting up rival

The BMC's Regional Access Database (RAD) has up to date information on all crags in England and Wales. Otherwise access rep contact details are on the [BMC web site](#). Access reps attend most Area Meetings if there are any points you want to raise with them, or you can phone Henry Folkard on 01298 871 849 or the BMC office on 0161 445 6111 (office@thebmc.co.uk).



recruitment initiatives, but the National Park approach seems rather to be it is for everybody to want to help them. It is not for them to work with anyone else – precisely the obverse of what they expect of others.

Things may have moved on by the time of the Area Meeting, and I can give an update if they have, answer any questions or perhaps be a little more frank than it is prudent to be in a written document.

Before finishing on Stanage there are two more things. The first is that Bill Gordon, the highly esteemed on site warden, has had a replacement hip operation, and, at the time of my last enquiry, was doing fine. The second is that a couple of weekends ago quite a few members of the public were significantly distressed to see a couple of dogs, reported to probably have been bull mastiffs ‘with heads over a foot across’ rip a sheep apart, apparently biting half its head off. The incident was policed, and officers who attended and were given witness contact details were seen to be in conversation with the owner of the dogs.

The BMC is having some ‘No dogs’ signs made with **Moscar Estate** to replace the extant shabby

ones. Moscar, Bamford and Stanage Moors under the ownership of Moscar Estates are open access land, but since they are grouse moors dogs are legitimately excluded under CROW (Countryside and Rights of Way Act) at all times of the year (unless on a public right of way (but not a concessionary path) and under close control).

Various projects – there are actually 42 of them – funded by the **Dark Peak Nature Improvement Area** are making progress. The bracken at Hooks Carr will get another dose of spray in the Spring, and it is hoped this can be extended to the dense beds under Bamford Edge too.

Proposals for substantial removal of the Great Britain Plantation in the Burbage Valley are in hand. Alternative access paths have been agreed for when the Green Drive is closed – it is all a bit academic since you can walk anywhere anyhow – and follow established desire lines.

Arrangements for sky lining felled timber from Scotland and Wales, as it were, across the brook are sorted, as are the significant complications caused by planning, water voles and the like.

There will be a call for volunteers next year to conduct visitor surveys in car parks on some weekends – provisional dates for 2014 to be confirmed nearer the time are May 14,15,17,18; September 3,4,6,7; December 3,6,7. This is not physically exacting work, and of course no one would be able to volunteer for them all, but any help you can give will be much appreciated. The results will be pretty important. Louise Hawson has got her head round more of the detail than me, and she will probably be at the Area Meeting, but if not you can contact her via me.

Please send articles, letters, photos, notices and so forth, to peakarea@gmail.com All topics considered, the only requirement is that it is relevant to the mountaineers, walkers and climbers in the Peak Area. Summit magazine is the place for the national stuff. Any length up to 600 words; if you want to go longer, best to call us first. **We particularly welcome material from clubs.** Deadline for material is two weeks before the meeting.



And thanks Louise for all the work you do in support of the NIA.

The other Saturday there was an **Eastern Moors** stakeholders meeting, and what a really positive meeting it turned out to be. It started at 10 am and it must have been nearly 2 pm before we got away but that was just because it took that long for Danny to run through all the work that was completed and in hand – and it is all really positive because it's all well thought through and holistic in its approach. The range was from new access routes – particularly concessionary bridleways – to conservation measures for golden ringed dragonflies to molinia bashing and heather seeding to archaeology and ornithology to where the adders were in the summer to analysis of peat depth to detailed visitor surveys to distinct but complementary promotion for Longshaw and Eastern Moors to grey areas on charging policy to volunteer input to special guided walks to see the deer and a whole lot more besides. If you do notice the new Pay and Display machine at the Robin Hood rest assured that, unlike North Lees, everything put in it goes directly to funding conservation work on the estate.

On top of that Dave and his Peak Climbing Club stalwarts had a successful work meet at Birchens, and then went on to do more at Froggatt on Brookside Buttress, and re-discovered some other gems concealed below the path – all in the most terrible weather. Thanks Dave. We have heard the questions people are asking about Gardoms and Chatsworth where, because of different ownership, making arrangements is far more

difficult and has stalled in the past. Time to try again.

There were some proposals to locate a family of travellers by the parking area at **Black Rocks**, and local people mounted a campaign against it which the BMC supported. I was able to lobby the CEO of Derbyshire Dales District Council directly on the matter, and she told me that site was no longer an option. I promised she would hear from us again if ever that was reconsidered.

So to the White Peak where, depending on the crag, things are either all quiet or else elusive of solution. Thus we have not made progress on **Ravensdale**: Head Office raised the question of climbing in SSSIs with Natural England because it kept cropping up and there was inconsistency in response. A meeting was duly arranged. It was postponed by NE, rearranged, postponed again and is now set for the end of the month.

Similarly the action we planned on **Water cum Jolly** could not go ahead when we wanted it to because we had reason to believe it would have fallen flat. When the right moment seemed to have come other related issues intervened. Sorry if that is all a bit opaque, but there has been behind the scenes dialogue to which Chatham House Rules¹ have had to apply, and the issue is certainly not forgotten.

At **Willersley and Staden** we have had no reports of de facto access being impeded, though we sense that any attempt to formalise arrangements would be resisted. It is sometimes

¹ Participants are free to use information received but the identity of those involved may not be revealed.



best not to push things. There are still rumours of development proposals at Staden, one being to gain access to the site so it can be developed by building a tunnel beneath the historic structures whose preservation was central to the appeal failing.

Horseshoe and Aldery have both recently had their autumnal trim and are looking good. Following the alarming descent of some massive blocks at Aldery no more debris has fallen, and we had a geotechnician check the place over. As with all old aggregate quarries, there is intrinsic instability at both sites – as indeed there is on natural crags – and it's never wise to take anything for granted when climbing there. There is a work meet at Horseshoe on **30 November** and anyone who can turn up will be welcome. We will be hosting some Conservation Volunteers from Sheffield University who do a brilliant job on helping us to keep the SSSI in favourable condition, but extra pairs of hands are always welcome. Saws and loppers can be handy too. Duncan did a first rate job clearing a lot of the mown grass off the top land by way of preparation, happily on one of the few days when it was not raining – so that's another big thank you.

In the **South West Peak** there are some proposals being worked up for something like the Dark Peak NIA (Nature Improvement Area). Mostly this seems to be about wading birds, and the BMC is not directly involved, but I have made representation via the Peak LAF about linking public rights of way in the area and reviewing the bridleway network, so hopefully something on that will be included in any bid. I have also logged a personal observation that signage of

footpaths is pretty poor in Staffordshire and could do with an overhaul. If any South West Peak people can cite places where linkages are needed or signage has completely disappeared please let me know and I can ask for it to be included in any specification.

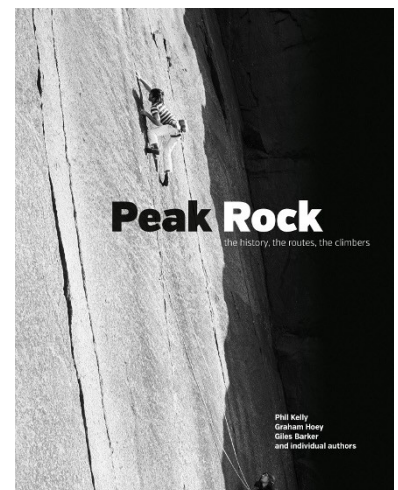
Between now and the Area Meeting there will be meetings **concerning ACT** (the Access and Conservation Trust), **PASA** (Peak Adventure Sports Activity) **and the Quarries Working Group** so I will give a brief update on developments on those three fronts then.

Finally a diary date for 2014: the annual **Spirit of Kinder** lecture will be at the Town Hall, Sheffield, on **Saturday 26 April**.

Peak Rock

Excerpt from *Peak Rock*, by Phil Kelly, Graham Hoey and Giles Barker.

Peak Rock cover: Andy Pollitt climbing Ron Fawcett's route *Scritto's Republic* at Millstone Edge. Photo: Bernard Newman.



The Traverse of the Promontory at Black Rocks
Peter Harding and Tony Moulam began their list of new routes in 1945 when Moulam led Green Crack at Black Rocks after a top rope tussle to remove vast amounts of turf that filled the crack at the time. The pair then immediately turned



their attention to a traverse of the line of weaknesses that cross the huge Promontory that dominates the main area of the cliff.

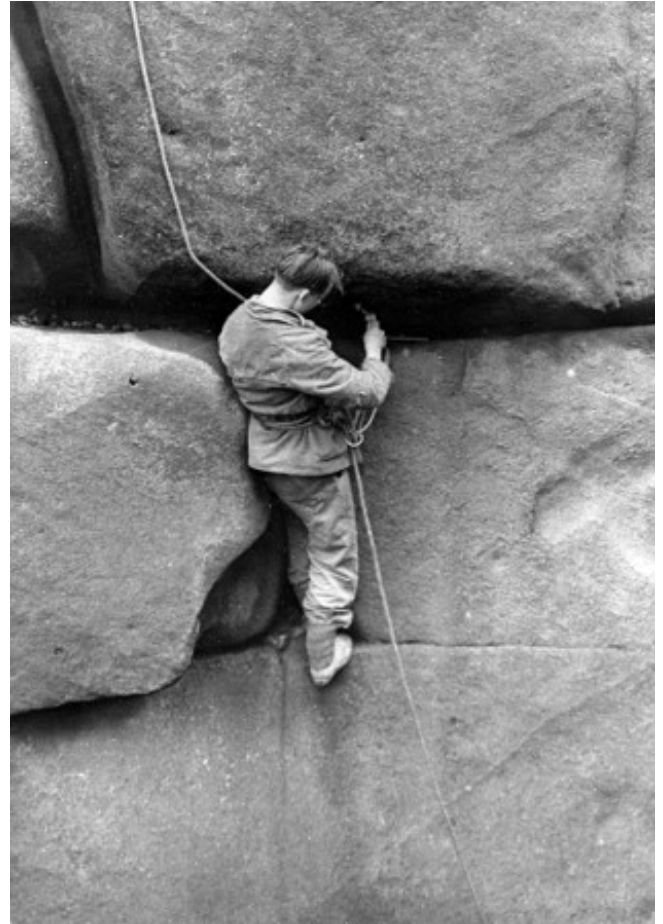
They deemed this route to be sufficiently difficult and serious to require top rope practice and, in fact, two complete top rope crossings were made of the full traverse, on the first occasion by Harding and on the second by both Harding and Moulam.

Harding needed to find a method of protection for the first pitch of the traverse. On inspection he found that there were two opposing flutes in the lower break and so a 12-inch-long bar of silver steel was purchased from an ironmonger's shop opposite St Werburgh's church in Derby; the same shop that sold Harding and Moulam their sisal and plaited cotton ropes.

Harding planned to use this bar as a running belay lodged between the two flutes, and again on another top rope inspection he traversed out to place the bar, only to find that it was slightly too long to fit properly.

As Tony Moulam recalls:
'Peter returned to the 'mainland' to cut off (with a cunningly carried hacksaw) 1/2" of his 12" bar, so that it fitted neatly into the opposing flutes in the niche. Sometime later he retrieved the bar for his personal museum.'

With the bar cut, Harding again traversed out on a top rope and placed the bar, clipping it into a trailing rope as if he was practising for a lead attempt, and continued across the traverse.



Peter Harding testing the placement of the metal bar runner on the Promontory Traverse. Photo: Ernie Phillips Collection.

The traverse itself also needed two visits to complete; Moulam was still a schoolboy at this time and the following Thursday lunchtime (12th July) Harding cycled around to Tony's house and asked his mother to pass on a message for Tony to meet him at Black Rocks that evening.

Together with Ken Herbert, Harding met Moulam at the crag that evening and following a warm up ascent of Sand Buttress, Herbert photographed the pair making the first ascent of the traverse.



Harding set off once more, placing the bar as he climbed, doing the contorted 'back move' before moving up to what they called the 'toad's mouth' and reaching the exposed and poorly protected belay on the nose of the Promontory. Moulam followed and led across to the spike on the second pitch from where they abseiled off.



Peter Harding lassoing the spike on the second pitch of the Promontory Traverse. Photo: Ernie Phillips Collection.

The pair returned once more, on the following Sunday, 15th July, to continue their traverse from start to finish, beyond the spike, to complete their route The Promontory Traverse, a route which they graded as Very Severe and described as follows in their guide to Black Rocks:

'Very severe. Very exposed. The finest climb on the cliff. Some fine situations.'

Even now, with modern protection devices and large cams, the Promontory Traverse fully warrants a grade of E1, and it continues to stand as a significant first ascent on Peak District rock.

Peak Rock – the history of the cutting edge of Peak District climbing – is available in late November, published by Vertebrate Publishing (www.v-publishing.co.uk). A proportion of the proceeds from the sale of *Peak Rock* will be donated to the Mountain Heritage Trust.

John Coefield will be bringing a copy of the book to the AGM for people to look at. It is available from the BMC shop; members price £34.15, non-members £37.95.

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